The SPS Connection

March/April 2006

New Agency Dedicated to Modernizing Business Activity

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Mission: To transform business operations to achieve improved warfighter support while enabling financial accountability across the Department of Defense.

BTA operates under the authority, direction and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)).

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Since the mid-1960s, the Standard Form (SF) 44 – a four-part, carbon-copy tablet – has been used extensively by Field Ordering Officers (FOOs) to manually procure goods and services in theater. But the times are a changin'! An electronic version of the SF44 (or eSF44) will provide service members with an automated deployable...

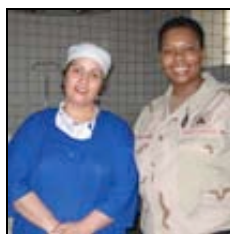**Read Full Article**

Colonel's Corner

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A Note from Renee' Willis-Williams, Contract Specialist

I've had an interest in the Army's Standard Procurement System since I became a Contract Specialist in 1999 with the Defense Supply Service – Washington (DSS-W), now CCE. I was fortunate that my talent for automation and systems allowed me to work on the launch of DSS-W's DARTS 2000, the eDARTS requisitioning system interface...

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Tips & Tricks

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Read Full Article

SPS COE Portal: A Helpful Tool at Your Fingertips

Information about Increment 3, the Adapter, and other important SPS issues awaits you at the **SPS Center of Excellence (COE) Portal**. Search announcements, get contact information, send feedback, learn about upcoming events, and download documents of interest. Simply click on the **COE Portal Login** link in the upper right corner of the homepage to begin your online experience.

Meet PCI Communications

A note from the new communications support contractor for JPMO.

As the new communications partner for JPMO, PCI is excited to jump right in and get started. The team has been working hard to learn as much as possible about SPS, its diverse user base, and the many ways it helps to support today's warfighter.

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Get to Know Your SPS Desk Officer

Technically speaking, the Desk Officers of the SPS "serve as the liaisons between the SPS Joint Program Management Office (JPMO), the SPS user community, and Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition leaders." Translation… The Desk Officers represent YOU, your needs and your interests.

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Change is coming! The SPS Connection will soon be getting a facelift. Send us your suggestions for improvements. Thanks to everyone who participated in our recent logo survey! Your input is helping to guide current branding efforts.

Click here to send your SPS-related comments, questions or issues to the SPS Desk Officers.

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Mission: To transform business operations to achieve improved warfighter support while enabling financial accountability across the Department of Defense.

BTA operates under the authority, direction and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L). It is organized into seven divisions, including the office of the Defense Business Systems Acquisition Executive (DBSAE), Major General Butch Pair. The six remaining offices are:

- *Transformation Planning and Performance* – Led by David Fisher; responsible for maintaining and updating the DoD Business Enterprise Architecture (BEA) and corresponding Enterprise Transition Plan (ETP).

- *Transformation Priorities and Requirements* – Led by Ms. Radha Sekar; primary link to the Principal Staff Assistants (functional business requirement owners) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as well as other DOD-level organizations including US Transportation Command, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

- *Investment Management* – Led by Mr. Paul Ketrick; responsible for supporting the execution of investment management processes established to oversee defense business systems investments across the department.

- *Warfighter Support* – Led by Mr. Bob Love; identifies urgent enterprise-level business issues directly impacting the warfighter and works to resolve these issues via rapid systems capability and process improvements.

- *Information and Federation Strategy* – Led by Mr. Dave Scantling; manages BTA information strategy, encompassing integration efforts, strategic planning, change management, technology visioning, and long-term internal and external communications.

- *Agency Operations* – Led by Captain Michael Murphy; provides the agency its personnel pay, planning, budgeting, infrastructure, and management activities.

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There's a New Face at JPMO!

A Note from Renee' Willis-Williams, Contract Specialist

I've had an interest in the Army's Standard Procurement System since I became a Contract Specialist in 1999 with the Defense Supply Service – Washington (DSS-W), now CCE. I was fortunate that my talent for automation and systems allowed me to work on the launch of DSS-W's DARTS 2000, the eDARTS requisitioning system interface, and the transfer of the Army's contracting system from SACCONS to SPS.

My role assisting with SPS functionality at both high (Jr. SA) and lower (PD2 Super User) levels has kept me interested in the progression of the SPS program. That interest ultimately led me to POE-EIS/SPSJPMO. As a Contract Specialist, I am responsible for working the actual contracts that support the Standard Army Procurement Systems and its interfaces. One might say that having been involved with SPS from the very beginning, I have developed a true passion for the system. It seems only natural that I now have my hands in the creator's corner.

My most exciting – and fascinating – experience with SPS was my contingency assignment with the Corps of Engineers in Kabul, Afghanistan. The project nearest my heart there was the rebuild of the Women's Hospital, *Rabia-E-Balki*. I got to witness, first hand, the medical staff of women take back their cherished work after so many years of persecution. The experience was, in a word, overwhelming. Working hand in hand with the nationals who struggle so hard to maintain the little functionality they have in the hospital facilities was amazing.

As for my personal story – I am the mother to four-year-old twin boys (John Thomas and Rodgers Timothy Williams) and wife to a wonderful husband (whom I affectionately call Mr. Rodgers) who took care of our boys while I was in Kabul.

My view is from the bottom up in functionality, which is critical in maintaining a system that both directly and indirectly supports the war fighter and Department of Defense.

"Having been a facilitator for years with SPS, I am excited to have joined the JPMO team. I look forward to sharing the insight gained from my experiences as a Contract Specialist and SPS user.

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A little background on PCI: We are a creative communications agency that provides both strategies – the research, analysis, ideation, and plans for marketing, media relations, outreach and internal communications – as well as professional in-house services to implement those strategies including graphics, Web/interactive design, video, film, and event production. PCI has served, or continues to serve, as a communications partner for several other leading government agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the National Transportation Safety Board. This experience – and the insight gained from it – will no doubt prove valuable as we adapt to the unique SPS JPMO environment.

One of our main goals is to increase the flow of communication between JPMO and all levels of SPS users in a convenient and streamlined manner. In the coming weeks and months, we will be restructuring current communications efforts and vehicles in an attempt to maximize impact and increase overall reach.

The PCI "SPS" team consists of…

Myself, Robert Sprague, Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer
Justin DeVinney, Account Executive
Greg Pasha, Senior Project Manager
Rebecca Hall, Public Relations Manager
Amber McLaughlin, Writer/Strategist
Liz Garavaglia, Public Relations Coordinator
Angie DeLorme, Graphic Artist
Ugur Ozkardesler, Multimedia Designer

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or recommendations you may have regarding SPS communications. Your input will always be welcome… and greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Robert Sprague
Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer

From left to right (back row): Ugur (favorite snack is Cheetos), Amber (favorite movie is Capote), Bob (Johannes Brahms groupie), Greg (favorite author is Edgar Allen Poe), (front row) Becca (last vacation was in Hawaii), Liz (favorite board game is Cranium), Angie (loves to hike).

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Welcome PCI
PCI Communications has joined us as our new communications support contractor. Their immediate tasks include refreshing the *SPS Connection* in response to your ideas and suggestions, as well as providing "news you can use" as you execute your duties as contracting professionals. I would like to ask your help in sharing the *SPS Connection* with your colleagues. In the coming months, you can also expect strengthened links between the *SPS Connection* and SPS Center of Excellence.

BTA
The new Defense Business Transformation Agency (BTA) announced its organizational structure on February 3, 2006. My senior staff and I have met frequently with MG Carlos "Butch" Pair, the Defense Business Systems Acquisition Executive (DBSAE). Our transition to BTA is underway and is expected to be complete by October 1, 2006. You can visit the BTA web site at http://www.dod.mil/bta/ to learn more.

eSF44
Major Ed Pettengill was recently with our troops in Iraq deploying the new Digital Standard Form (SF) 44 hand-held system for field testing. The eSF44 is currently undergoing IOT&E by the Joint Contracting Command in Baghdad. Future plans call for integrating the eSF44 with contracting systems used in sustainment mode, providing a complete, end-to-end contracting capability. You'll be able to read an in-depth interview with him in the next edition of the *SPS Connection*. The new handheld eSF44 will increase the speed and effectiveness of theater-based contracting operations by providing pre-filled invoice and vendor information, enabling vendor and purchase data to be electronically sorted, summarized, aggregated, and downloaded. It will shorten the payment requested and reconciliation processes, print receipts on the spot, support secure digital authorization, and enable commanders to know not only how much money was spent, but on which classes of supplies.

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Get to Know Your SPS Desk Officer

Mr. George Chavis
Army Desk Officer
703.460.1037
George.chavis@eis.army.mil

Ms. Liz Gooding
ODA Desk Officer
703.460.1038
Liz.gooding@us.army.mil

Mr. Eric Ferraro
Navy/USMC Desk Officer
703.460.1364
Eric.ferraro@navy.mil

Mr. Roger Berger
DCMA Desk Officer
703.460.1332
Roger.berger@dcma.mil

Ms. Susan Haskew
Air Force Desk Officer
703.460.1423
Susan.haskew@pentagon.af.mil

Ms. Kate Ehrle
DLA Desk Officer
703.322.5990
Katherine.ehrle@us.ibm.com

Technically speaking, the Desk Officers of the SPS "serve as the liaisons between the SPS Joint Program Management Office (JPMO), the SPS user community, and Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition leaders." Translation… The Desk Officers represent YOU, your needs and your interests. Take a moment to learn more about Eric, Liz, and Susan, and what they think the future holds for SPS. Watch for future issues of *SPS Connection* to learn about George, Roger, and Kate.

Eric Ferraro - U.S. Navy and Marine Corps

Years as an SPS Desk Officer? Years in the procurement world?
Three years as an SPS Desk Officer, but worked with the previous Desk Officers for four additional years. Spent twenty years as a Naval Supply Corps Officer, seven on the Navy SPS CMO Team.

Greatest accomplishment as an SPS Desk Officer?
Helping the Navy get all sites on v4.2.2. Visiting all the Navy/USMC sites for IOC and FOC certifications.

Future of SPS in your Service or Agency?
I think SPS v4.2.2 is the way to go for the next several years as most of the Navy and Marine Corps sites have SPS v4.2.2 interfaced to their existing business/financial systems (such as ERP), and have a very good "end to end" process in place. It's not a 100% solution, but given the limited resources available for business systems, it makes sense to continue using the current version. We currently use

v4.2.2 at Post, camp and station sites, as well as at Major Systems Commands.

Do you believe SPS will play a significant role in improving business processes?
Yes, it already has. During Hurricane Katrina, the Navy was able to shift the workload for contracting actions around the country to support the relief effort.

Liz Gooding - Other Defense Agencies

Years as an SPS Desk Officer? Years in the procurement world?
SPS Desk Officer since 1996; Background in Program Management/Program Analysis.

Greatest accomplishment as an SPS Desk Officer?
Getting the Agencies installed and supported, and being responsive to their needs. This can be challenging because the ODA is not an entity of it's own. It's really only a label. Each Agency is it's own separate "service," as opposed to one group as the label implies. There is no central funding and policy.

Future of SPS in your Service or Agency?
The Agencies are committed to using SPS and will deploy Increment 3 once it's proven to provide the necessary contract writing functionality for each community. In the next several years, I see us beginning the long process of getting a new software product to a state where users are truly satisfied. This means another evolution of training, learning, and accepting a new product. I expect it will be difficult, but our users have demonstrated their ability to adapt and press forward to get the job done.

Do you believe SPS will play a significant role in improving business processes?
Yes, I believe it already has and can continue to do so. We have already retired the major legacy contract writing systems and continue to implement requirements in the SPS software to support DoD initiatives to improve accounting and payment business processes. It will take time, but I believe it's the right direction.

Susan Haskew - U.S. Air Force

Years as an SPS Desk Officer? Years in the procurement world?
Five years as a desk officer. Eight years in the procurement world.

Greatest accomplishment as an SPS Desk Officer?
Assisting the AF with the initial fielding of SPS and the subsequent upgrades.

Future of SPS in your Service or Agency?
To field 4.2.2 to our Operational bases. Currently, AF is unable to field 4.2.2 due to technical difficulties with our translators in the new interface solution. In order to change this, we will need continued teamwork between the AFCIS, JPMO, CACI, and third-party software providers to discover the root cause of the issue and a solution.

Do you believe SPS will play a significant role in improving business processes?

Yes. It will minimize the learning curve when personnel transfer from one location to another, decrease the difficulty and expense of accommodating change (change one system vs. multiple legacy systems), and continue to automate the end-to-end procurement process. Automation has increased data integrity by decreasing the amount of errors occurring from repeating manual entry. It has decreased cycle time of the paperwork by automating the transfer of data between the procurement community and their partners in the FM and logistics.

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Where in the World is Major Pettengill?

New Blog Provides a Unique Perspective of Digital SF 44 Field Testing

Thanks to the marvels of advanced technology, *everyone* can follow Major Pettengill as he deploys the new Digital Standard Form (SF) 44 system for field testing in Iraq. On his new Blog, located at http://spscontingency.blogspot.com, Major Pettengill often references his whereabouts and activities, in addition to sharing the tremendously valuable feedback he's receiving from the field.

The Benefits of eSF44 (eSF44Overview.ppt)
Since the mid-1960s, SF 44 – a four-part, carbon-copy tablet – has been used by Field Ordering Officers (FOOs) to manually procure goods and services in theater. The new handheld eSF44 will improve the procurement process by:

- Providing pre-filled invoice and vendor information
- Enabling vendor and purchase data to be electronically sorted, summarized, aggregated, and downloaded
- Shortening the payment requested and reconciliation processes
- Printing receipts on the spot
- Supporting secure digital authorization
- Enabling commanders to know not only how much money was spent, but on which classes of supplies
- Standing up to the harsh elements and conditions of austere combat environments

Bookmark Major Pettengill's Blog and check back often for updates from the field!

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Digital SF44 Makes Debut

Feb 16, 2006
For BTA
eNewsletter

Since the mid-1960s, the Standard Form (SF) 44 – a four-part, carbon-copy tablet – has been used extensively by Field Ordering Officers (FOOs) to manually procure goods and services in theater. But the times are a changin'! An electronic version of the SF44 (or eSF44) will provide service members with an automated deployable procurement tool to quickly generate purchase orders and contracts in contingency situations while ensuring accounting data integrity.

The new handheld eSF44 (eSF44Overview.ppt) will increase the speed and effectiveness of theater-based contracting operations in many ways: It provides pre-filled invoice and vendor information; enables vendor and purchase data to be electronically sorted, summarized, aggregated, and downloaded; shortens the payment requested and reconciliation processes; prints receipts on the spot; supports secure digital authorization; and enables commanders to know not only how much money was spent, but on which classes of supplies. Finally, unlike its paper predecessor, the eSF44 stands up to the harsh elements and atmospheric conditions of austere combat environments.

Development of the eSF44 is being spearheaded by the Standard Procurement System (SPS) JPMO, and the new capability is currently undergoing IOT&E by the Joint Contracting Command in Baghdad. Future plans call for integrating the eSF44 with contracting systems used in sustainment mode, providing a complete, end-to-end contracting capability. The eSF44 is one example of how in-theater business transformation is directly impacting the warfighter today.

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Tips & Tricks
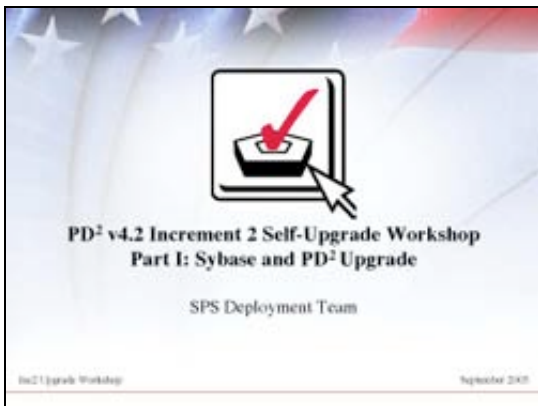
Increment 1 to Increment 2

Good news! The conversion to PD² v4.2 Increment 2 allows Systems Administrators to perform Self-Upgrades for the first time. This hands-on approach saves costs and provides Systems Administrators with an opportunity to increase their technical skills. Many sites are already benefiting from the functional improvements provided by Increment 2. As most Systems Administrators are aware, the upgrade process is complex and requires a considerable amount of preparation. To minimize user interruption and system down time, detailed instructions, user guides and web-based training are available to assist with the conversion to 4.2.2.

While close coordination with your SPS Desk Officer is the key to a smooth upgrade, keep reading for important tips, as well as a list of helpful resources.
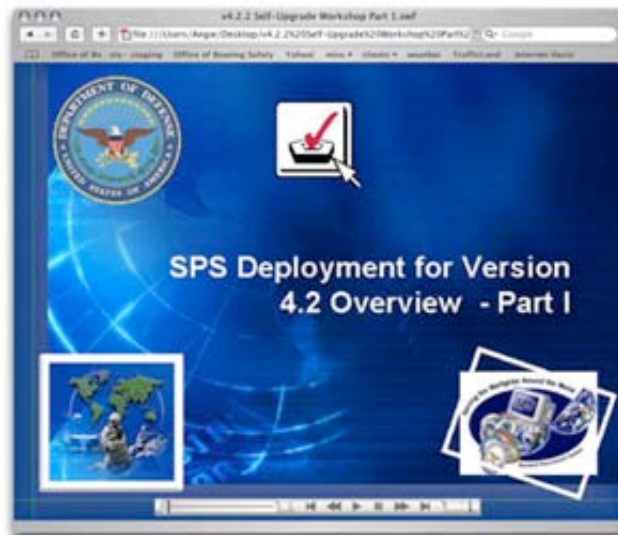
- *Interfaces:* Coordinate with your Desk Officer to ensure that the Increment 2 Adapter, with appropriate translators and mappings, is available to interface with financial and requisitioning systems used by your site.

- *Document Formats:* Be sure to document all local format information prior to upgrade. The upgrade process will delete all section information for locally defined or customized document formats and reset the default formats.

- *Funds Certification Documents (FCDs):* For any sites that may still be using Funds Certification Documents (FCDs), be sure to apply all FCDs prior to the upgrade. (FCDs have been removed in Increment 2.)

- *Organization Names:* Character restrictions have been applied. Organizations with names exceeding 40 characters should be shortened and renamed.

- *Bitmap Signatures:* To aid in post-upgrade importing, gather all bitmap signatures and place them in a central location.

- *Un-generated Actions:* Any documents requiring generation should be generated prior to the upgrade to ensure correct auto assignment of contract ACRNs. Compose a list of all unreleased solicitations, amendments, awards, and modifications before the upgrade. (Use the Cognos Impromptu software and the PD² Catalog.) Note: Due to enhanced contract administration functionality in Increment 2, unreleased modifications must also be regenerated.

- *Security Model:* Although not required, it's a good idea to document your security model prior to any major upgrade. A Cognos "Security Model Report" is available at https://armysps.sdcl.lee.army.mil/spsportal/Default.aspx?tabid=167.

- *EDI function has been removed:* Documents designated for EDI transmission must be transmitted prior to upgrade. Increment 2 uses the PD2 Adapter to transmit documents via XML files (as will future versions).

- *Attachments:* Use standard external storage for documents customarily used as attachments prior to upgrade (word documents on C: drive, etc.) During the upgrade, customized attachments will be overwritten if they are stored in the PD2 directory.

- *CLIN Templates:* Save any custom CLIN Templates as Word documents outside of PD2, as **they will be overwritten during upgrade**. (These may be added to the system post upgrade.)

- *Reports:* It is recommended that you generate, print and save your regularly used report results prior to upgrade. Once complete, re-create your reports to ensure they run with the upgraded catalog, then generate, print, and save results for comparison with the pre-upgrade reports.

- *Back up, Back up, Back up!:* Most System Administration Task settings and site-defined defaults will be automatically transferred into the updated application. Nevertheless, it is recommended that you document all information needed to recreate your system configuration manually, should the need arise.

PD² v4.2 Increment 2 Self-Upgrade Workshop
Part I: Sybase and PD² Upgrade

SPS Deployment Team

One of the main differences in Increment 2 is the replacement of "SPS-I" with the "Adapter." The installation of the Adapter, with associated translators and mappings to facilitate exchanging information with other business systems via XML files, is a major step in the process.

Just prior to your upgrade, the most important thing you can do is read and review the PD² Installation Guide and the Self Upgrade Guide. They contain step-by-step instructions, which are also discussed in Computer Based Training lessons available on the SPS COE Portal. Depending on database size, the upgrade could take several days (during which your site will be down). Plan accordingly and keep users informed of the conversion. They will play a key role in your back up of internal documents and regularly used attachments. Shared information makes for fewer growing pains.

Here are some links to resources that will augment the installation and upgrade guides:

PD² v4.2 Increment 2 SR05 Hardware/Software Requirements: Hardware Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions: Upgrade FAQs

Site Lessons Learned: Lessons Learned

Increment 2 Upgrade Documentation: Upgrade Documentation

SPS JPMO Upgrade Workshop Presentation Slides: Upgrade Workshop Slides

Computer Based Training:

Computer Based Training covering the upgrade process is available on the SPS COE Web Site, http://www.spscoe.sps.eis.army.mil/. After logging on, click on "Deployment Increment 2" on the left side of the page. In the center panel, click on the link beneath the words "Download CBT here." Then click on "v4.2 Increment 2 Self-Upgrade Workshop." You will see two folders labeled "Executable Version" and "Flash Version." The executable version allows you to download and save lessons to your hard drive. The Flash version allows you to run lessons over the Internet, without saving files.

Even if you have onsite support to facilitate your upgrade process, we encourage you to take advantage of the resources available to you. Access the SPS COE and Knowledge Base frequently for the latest information, and keep in touch with your desk officer. If you have questions, have your Authorized Caller contact the SPS Help Desk at sps.helpdesk@caci.com.

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User Survey Results: A Progress Report

The SPS User Satisfaction Survey that appeared on the COE portal through January yielded helpful feedback regarding SPS resourcesthat has – and will continue to – steer all modification and update efforts.

Many suggestions have already been implemented. For example, upon request, a logoff command was added to the COE portal on December 27th. Other suggestions, like adding more content (e.g. documents, briefings, information on Increment 3), are in the works. Several participants felt that the system prompts for login/password too frequently.

Unfortunately, this is not something that can be changed, as it is a security function.

Regarding the SPS Connection specifically, many helpful comments were received. For example, JPMO learned that readers consider the Tips & Tricks section to be very useful. Consequently, efforts are currently underway to grow that section for upcoming issues of the newsletter.

More progress reports to come. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the survey!

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